



**MEROLA
OPERA PROGRAM**

**MEROLA OPERA PROGRAM CONTINUES ITS 61ST SEASON WITH
THE RAKE'S PROGRESS
August 2 and 4 in San Francisco**

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (12 June 2018) – San Francisco's acclaimed **Merola Opera Program**, one of the most prestigious and selective opera training programs in the world, offers audiences a look at the opera stars of tomorrow with a lively, fully-staged production of ***The Rake's Progress***. Based loosely on the eponymous eight paintings and engravings by William Hogarth (1733-1735), Stravinsky's dramatic opera follows the decline and fall of a profligate heir who makes a devil's bargain with Nick Shadow, abandoning life in the country and his tender fiancée for the wicked temptations of London. ***The Rake's Progress*** will be performed **7:30pm, Thursday, August 2** and **2:00pm, Saturday, August 4** at the **San Francisco Conservatory of Music**. For tickets or more information, visit www.merola.org or call **(415) 864-3330**.

Igor Stravinsky adopted a variety of styles throughout his career, with this opera marking the end of his use of neo-classicism. Evoking the memory of Mozart, the opera's music also salutes Rossini, Verdi, and Handel. Stravinsky's intricate score and W.H. Auden and Chester Kallman's brilliant libretto will offer the Merola artists an exciting challenge. Noted arias include Nick Shadow's "I was never saner" and Tom Rakewell's "Here I stand."

Performances will be conducted by Mark Morash (Merola 1987), currently the Director of Musical Studies at the San Francisco Opera Center. As a collaborative pianist, Morash's performances have taken him throughout North America, Japan, and Russia, where he has collaborated with renowned artists such as Michael Schade, Tracy Dahl, and Sheri Greenawald.

The concert will be directed by Robin Guarino, who has staged lauded productions at the Metropolitan Opera, Seattle Opera, Glimmerglass Opera, Julliard Opera Center, and many more. In addition to her career directing opera and theater, she has produced and directed four independent films.

Merola Artists selected to star in ***The Rake's Progress*** are Anne Maguire (Mezzo-Soprano), Addison Marlor (Tenor), Andrew Moore (Bass-Baritone), Christopher Oglesby (Tenor), Ted Allen Pickell (Bass-Baritone), Jacob Scharfman (Baritone), Alexandra Urquiola (Mezzo-Soprano), and Meigui Zhang (Soprano). Casting is as follows:

- Tom Rakewell – Christopher Oglesby
- Anne Trulove– Meigui Zhang
- Nick Shadow – Jacob Scharfman
- Baba the Turk – Anne Maguire

- Father Trulove – Ted Pickell
- Sellem – Addison Marlor
- Mother Goose – Alexandra Urquiola
- Keeper of the Madhouse – Andrew Moore

Now in its 61st season, the **Merola Opera Program** is widely regarded as the foremost opera training program for aspiring singers, coach accompanists, and stage directors. Merola nurtures the opera stars of tomorrow and presents outreach through educational programs for students and the general public. Throughout the summer, the Merola artists participate in master classes and private coaching with opera's most accomplished singers, conductors, and directors. Participants also receive training in operatic repertory, foreign languages, diction, acting, and stage movement. Offered free of charge for all participants, the Merola Opera Program is unique in the industry in many ways. It is the only young artist program to provide financial support to developing artists for five years following participation, offering financial aid for essential career development costs including coaching, language classes, and audition travel. In addition, only Merola graduates are considered for participation in the San Francisco Opera Adler Fellowship Program. Merola has served as a proving ground for hundreds of artists, who have gone on to extensive careers in opera, including Leona Mitchell, Anna Netrebko, Patricia Racette, Carol Vaness, Deborah Voigt, Joyce DiDonato, Susan Graham, Dolora Zajick, Rolando Villazon, Thomas Hampson, and Patrick Summers among many others.

FOR CALENDAR EDITORS:

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SHOWS: **7:30pm, Thursday, August 2**
2:00pm, Saturday, August 4

WHERE: San Francisco Conservatory of Music, 50 Oak St., San Francisco

TICKETS: \$55-\$80

Discount available for purchase of three San Francisco-based Summer Festival productions (deadline June 18, 2018). Also discount for groups of 10 or more. \$15 student tickets available in limited quantity in advance at San Francisco Opera Box Office.

INFO: For information or to order tickets visit or call the San Francisco Opera Box Office at **415-864-3330**. The box office is open Monday, 10am-5pm, and Tuesday through Friday, 10am-6pm.

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PHOTOS: Downloadable high-res photos are available here:
<http://www.cbpr.co/press/MerolaOperaProgram>